

Ronald and Maude Hartell Conservation Area

Ten-Year Area Management Plan

FY 2014-2023



Bruce Canaday
Fisheries Division Chief

4/14/15
Date

Ronald and Maude Hartell Conservation Area Plan Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

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NORTHWEST REGION

RCT Chair



Signature

October 3, 2014

Date

FISHERIES DIVISION

Unit Chief



Signature

4/8/15

Date

OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Ronald and Maude Hartell Conservation Area, #200001
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 2000
- **Acreage:** 111.2 acres
- **County:** Clinton
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Fisheries
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Fisheries
- **Statement of Purpose:**

A. Strategic Direction

The two primary purposes of this area are to provide the public with high quality/trophy bass and bluegill fishing in small impoundments and to provide educational opportunities related to natural resources including teacher workshops, fishing clinics, demonstrations sites and interpretive trails.

B. Desired Future Condition

The desired future condition for the Ronald and Maude Hartell CA is an area extensively managed for fisheries and outdoor education. The area will consist of a mixed grassland/forest landscape, dotted with demonstration plots and trails, providing outdoor recreation and educational opportunities. Managing the resources while protecting water quality and sustaining healthy fish populations in area ponds and rivers.

C. Federal Aid Statement

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

I. Special Considerations

- A. **Priority Areas:** Ronald and Maude Hartell Conservation Area lies within the Little Platte River Watershed that is designated as a priority watershed with the Missouri Department of Conservation (the Department).
- B. **Natural Areas:** None

II. Important Natural Features and Resources

- A. **Species of Conservation Concern:** Species of conservation concern are known from this area. Area Managers should consult the Natural Heritage Database annually and review all management activities with the Natural History Biologist.
- B. **Caves:** None
- C. **Springs:** None

III. Existing Infrastructure

- Residence (Residence scheduled for demolition)
- Shop
- Radio Tower
- Education Center with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible outdoor amphitheater, ADA accessible fishing platform and ADA accessible parking area
- ADA accessible covered floating fishing dock with ADA accessible parking lot
- 2 ADA accessible privies with ADA accessible parking areas
- 6 ponds with fishing opportunities (18.8 acres total)
- 3 fishless ponds
- 8 parking lots
- 1/4 mile interpretive hiking trail
- 2 miles of maintained gravel public access roads

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

- A. Deed Restrictions or Ownership Considerations:** The July 14, 1947, warranty deed with Harry C. and Helen B. Lee stipulates the property owners shall “agree to maintain a water gap over and across said creek (Smith’s Fork of Platte River), to be tight for cattle and sheep and hogs.”
- B. Federal Interest:** Federal funds may be used in the management of this land. Fish and wildlife agencies may not allow recreational activities and related facilities that would interfere with the purpose for which the State is managing the land. Other uses may be acceptable and must be assessed in each specific situation.
- C. Easements:** This area has the normal public road rights of way and associated utility easements along its boundary. The area also contains a 30-ft wide perpetual roadway easement that bisects the area north and south.
- D. Cultural Resource Findings:** No known cultural resources.
- E. Hazards:** None observed.
- F. Endangered Species:** None observed.
- G. Boundary Issues:** None

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Upland Prairie
- 2) Forest Resources

Management Objective 1: Maintain native, warm-season grass, and prairie forb fields throughout the area.

Strategy 1: Manage fields using prescribed fire, herbicides and additional native plantings.

Strategy 2: Develop and maintain demonstration plots of native, warm-season grass and prairie forbs for educational purposes.

Management Objective 2: Manage for a healthy and sustainable woodland and forest habitat and their benefits to the Hartell Conservation Area watershed.

Strategy 1: Maintain and plant native trees and vegetation as needed to maintain adequate riparian corridors within the watershed of The Ronald and Maude Hartell CA.

Strategy 2: Maintain and enhance windbreaks along roads and around area facilities.

Strategy 3: Strategic plantings of additional shade trees and future “hinge cut” tree around area ponds and parking lots.

Strategy 4: Monitor and treat any exotic and noxious vegetation with herbicides, mechanical treatments, and/or prescribed fire.

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Provide public with quality sport fish populations on area ponds.
- 2) Manage for native aquatic vegetation on area fisheries.
- 3) Increase aquatic habitat in area fisheries.
- 4) Possible change in area fishing regulations.

Management Objective 1: Manage for quality angling opportunities on area ponds.

Strategy 1: Perform fish population surveys to monitor for quality (Largemouth bass Proportional Stock Density PSD (12) values of 40-70, and bluegill PSD (6) values of 20-40) sport fish populations.

Strategy 2: Supplemental stocking of fish (channel catfish and hybrid bluegill) when needed to maintain quality angling opportunities.

Strategy 3: Implementation of strict harvest restrictions in order to maintain quality fish populations.

Management Objective 2: Manage for native aquatic vegetation on area.

Strategy 1: Maintain and plant native aquatic vegetation in all area ponds to enhance sport fish recruitment and add fish holding structure in strategic locations in ponds.

Strategy 2: Aquatic herbicide treatment of nuisance species when necessary.

Management Objective 3: Install brush pile structure in area ponds.

Strategy 1: Install brush piles to enhance sport fish recruitment and add fish holding structure in strategic locations in ponds as natural fish structure deteriorates.

Management Objective 4: Explore a change in the area fishing regulations.

Strategy 1: In an effort to reduce infrastructure on Department areas, the Hartell residence is scheduled for demolition. Once the residence is removed (summer 2014) and the area no longer has a fulltime Department presence, change the area regulations from a catch and release only area to a restrictive harvest area. The following lakes will then allow the harvest of fish: Lunker, Picnic, Quarry, Quiet and Redear lakes.

VII. Outreach and Education Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Public use of outdoor education facility for meetings, trainings and programs.
- 2) Provide a quality fishing experience for special events and educational activities.
- 3) Provide public interpretive trail for education opportunities.
- 4) Manage Wood Duck Slough as a fishless emergent wetland.

Management Objective 1: Maintain outdoor education facility for meetings, trainings, and programs dedicated to natural resources.

Strategy 1: Classroom facility available by reservation for educational events related to natural resources.

Strategy 2: Maintain classroom facility equipment, educational wildlife mounts, AV and appliances.

Management Objective 2: Manage Sunfish Lake for outdoor educational activities.

Strategy 1: Sunfish Lake is closed to public fishing and may only be used by educational groups with a Special Use Permit.

Strategy 2: Catch and release fishing only. All fish caught must be released unharmed immediately after being caught unless otherwise stipulated in a Special Use Permit.

Strategy 3: Supplemental stocking of fish (channel catfish and hybrid bluegill) when needed to maintain quality angling opportunities.

Strategy 4: Maintain concrete amphitheater and concrete fishing jetty on Sunfish

Lake for fishing clinics, educational events and demonstrations.

Management Objective 3: Maintain interpretive trail for education opportunities along Little Platte River.

Strategy 1: Routine maintenance of chat trail and rock stairs to ensure the structure and safety of the trail.

Strategy 2: Provide public with an interpretive trail brochure and maintain sign posts and bird houses along the trail.

Management Objective 4: Manage Wood Duck Slough as a fishless, emergent wetland for educational purposes.

Strategy 1: Manipulate water levels to enhance invertebrate, waterfowl, shorebird, and amphibian habitats and populations.

Strategy 2: Fish populations in Wood Duck Slough will continue to be eradicated and will be managed as a fishless, emergent wetland providing education opportunities such as invertebrate collections and the importance of wetland ecosystems.

Strategy 3: Plant native aquatic vegetation for identification purposes and wetland habitat diversity.

VIII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Provide quality infrastructure and regulations to access aquatic resources.
- 2) Provide quality infrastructure and regulations to access terrestrial resources.

Management Objective 1: Maintain infrastructure and regulations to access aquatic resources.

Strategy 1: Monitor and evaluate regulations annually.

Strategy 2: Maintain diverse accesses for angling opportunity.

Strategy 3: Mow/maintain the grassy areas around parking lots and ponds to allow public easy access aquatic resources.

Management Objective 2: Maintain infrastructure and regulations to access terrestrial resources.

Strategy 1: Monitor and evaluate infrastructure and regulations annually.

Strategy 2: Maintain area accesses for multiple user groups through signage and special use permits.

Strategy 3: Mow/maintain the grassy areas around parking to allow public easy access to terrestrial resources.

IX. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

Provide defined area boundaries through Department signage.

Management Objective 1: Maintain area boundaries

Strategy 1: Annually inspect area boundaries

MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

Strategies are considered ongoing unless listed in the following table:

	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
Aquatic Resource Management										
<i>Objective 1</i>										
Strategy 1	X		X		X		X		X	
<i>Objective 4</i>										
Strategy 1			X							

APPENDICES

Area Background:

Ronald and Maude Hartell Conservation Area is located in central Clinton County. In 1947, a group of outdoor enthusiasts (called the Clinton County Sportsmen's Club) purchased land from Mrs. A.C. Hartell, five miles northeast of Plattsburg, Missouri. Because of the membership's strong desire to have close-to-home fishing, the first two lakes on the area were built in 1950. The area includes seven lakes and stream frontage on the Little Platte River (Smith Fork).

For over 50 years, this was a popular area for club members to fish, picnic and camp. As other recreational areas were developed in the area (i.e., Smithville Reservoir), interest in the club property declined. Dwindling membership and a desire to preserve this area for public fishing and outdoor educational opportunities prompted the Clinton County Sportsmen's Club to donate their property to the Department in July 1999.

The area was named in honor of Ronald and Maude Hartell, two of the founding members of the Clinton County Sportsmen's Club, and area caretakers for many years.

The prominent features of the area are its six small impoundments ranging in size from two to five acres. Each impoundment is intensively managed with restrictive fishing regulations to provide high quality/trophy bass and bluegill fishing. The seventh pond is managed as a fishless, emergent wetland for educational purposes. The lakes were constructed between 1948 and 1957 and are in close proximity to each other and very accessible. Some pond dams and roads were reconstructed when the department took over in 1999.

The lakes' watersheds encompass 236 acres, of which approximately 165 acres (70 percent) is privately owned. The watersheds were primarily pasture with minimal erosion occurring until 2012 when all the pastures were converted to agricultural crop fields. As a result, the lakes are experiencing increased sedimentation resulting in increases in aquatic macrophytes and turbidity. In 2000, the Department acquired 31.2 acres of land from Harold and Connie Williams of Plattsburg, Missouri. This land consisted of two small agricultural fields which were converted to upland warm season grass and prairie. The addition brings the area to the current acreage of 111.2 acres.

In addition to the trophy fishery, the area is highly geared to provide educational opportunities related to natural resources including teacher workshops, fishing clinics, demonstration sites and interpretive trails. An enclosed, heated classroom was built between Sunfish Lake and Redear Lake in 2004. The classroom can seat 40 and is available by reservation for educational events related to natural resources. In 2009, an outdoor amphitheater was built outside of the classroom overlooking Sunfish Lake. The amphitheater can seat 60 and was constructed for outdoor educational opportunities. In 2010, a 0.25 mile interpretive hiking trail was built along the Little

Platte River. This chat trail is complete with interpretive brochure and sign posts along its route.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Feet	% of Area
Lakes/Ponds	18.4		16
Forest and Woodland	10		9
Grassland (non-prairie)	82.8		75
Total	111.2		100
Stream Frontage		2,050	

Public Input Summary:

The draft Ronald and Maude Hartell Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment June 1-30, 2014. The Department received comments from four respondents (Appendix A). The Ronald and Maude Hartell Conservation Area Planning Team carefully reviewed and considered these ideas, including how they were incorporated or why they were not, can be found below. Rather than respond to each individual comment, comments are grouped into general themes and are addressed collectively.

Department responses to themes and issues identified through the Ronald and Maude Hartell Conservation Area public comment period

Supports prairie and native habitat restoration.

The Department has converted nearly 30 acres of the Ronald and Maude Hartell CA to warm-season grasses and forbs. We will continue to manage these acres with prescribed burns and herbicides to help control the exotic species and woody encroachment.

Concern about removing catch and release restrictions.

There are two reasons for the change in the area regulations from catch and release fishing to a restrictive harvest regulation.

- 1) In an effort to reduce infrastructure on Department areas, the Hartell residence is scheduled for demolition. Once the residence is removed (winter 2014/2015) and the area no longer has a fulltime Department presence, it will be very difficult to enforce such a restrictive regulations. Once in place, the new regulations will allow the harvest of fish and use of bait under restrictive harvest regulations in Lunker, Picnic, Quarry, Quiet and Redear Lakes. Sunfish Lake will remain closed to the public and used for educational purposes only.
- 2) The catch and release regulation for the Hartell area has been in place since the area was opened in 1999. It was anticipated that the area would see heavy fishing pressure due to

the proximity to Kansas City. The heavy fishing pressure never became reality. The Department has made Angler Recruitment and Retention a major priority. We feel that the area will be better utilized if the catch and release regulations and no live bait regulations are lifted, and it will open the possibilities for more families and children to enjoy the Hartell CA fishing opportunities. The Department will continue to monitor the fish populations in all the small lakes on the area to ensure that we do not jeopardize the quality fishing that local anglers have come to expect.

Concern about fishing regulations being violated.

Local Conservation Agents will continue to monitor and patrol the Hartell CA to ensure that all rules and regulations are being followed on the area.

Concern that fishing catch rates have declined due to increased fishing pressure.

It is not uncommon to see catch rates decline due to an increase in fishing pressure. There are several factors that play a major role in this:

- 1) The Hartell CA regulations are very strict. Fishing regulations state that the area is catch and release only and the use of live baits or prepared baits are prohibited. These regulations educate the fish and the fish become very selective on what they eat, making them harder to catch.
- 2) We are dealing with relatively small bodies of water (2-5 acres) so the fish are seeing a lot of artificial baits.

Department Fisheries Biologists monitor the fish population regularly to ensure that we are maintaining quality fishing in all the area lakes. The lifting of the catch and release and no live bait regulations should make fish easier to catch, while the addition of a restricted harvest regulations should ensure that the quality of the fishery does not decline.

Suggests adding equestrian trails.

The Hartell CA is a relatively small conservation area (111 acres) of which the majority of the area is used for fishing and educational purposes. The Area Planning Team does not wish to pursue an equestrian trail at this time and would suggest utilizing other equestrian areas that are very close to Hartell CA such as Pony Express Conservation Area and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Smithville Lake.

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Aerial Map

Additional Appendices:

Appendix A: Draft Ronald and Maude Hartell Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

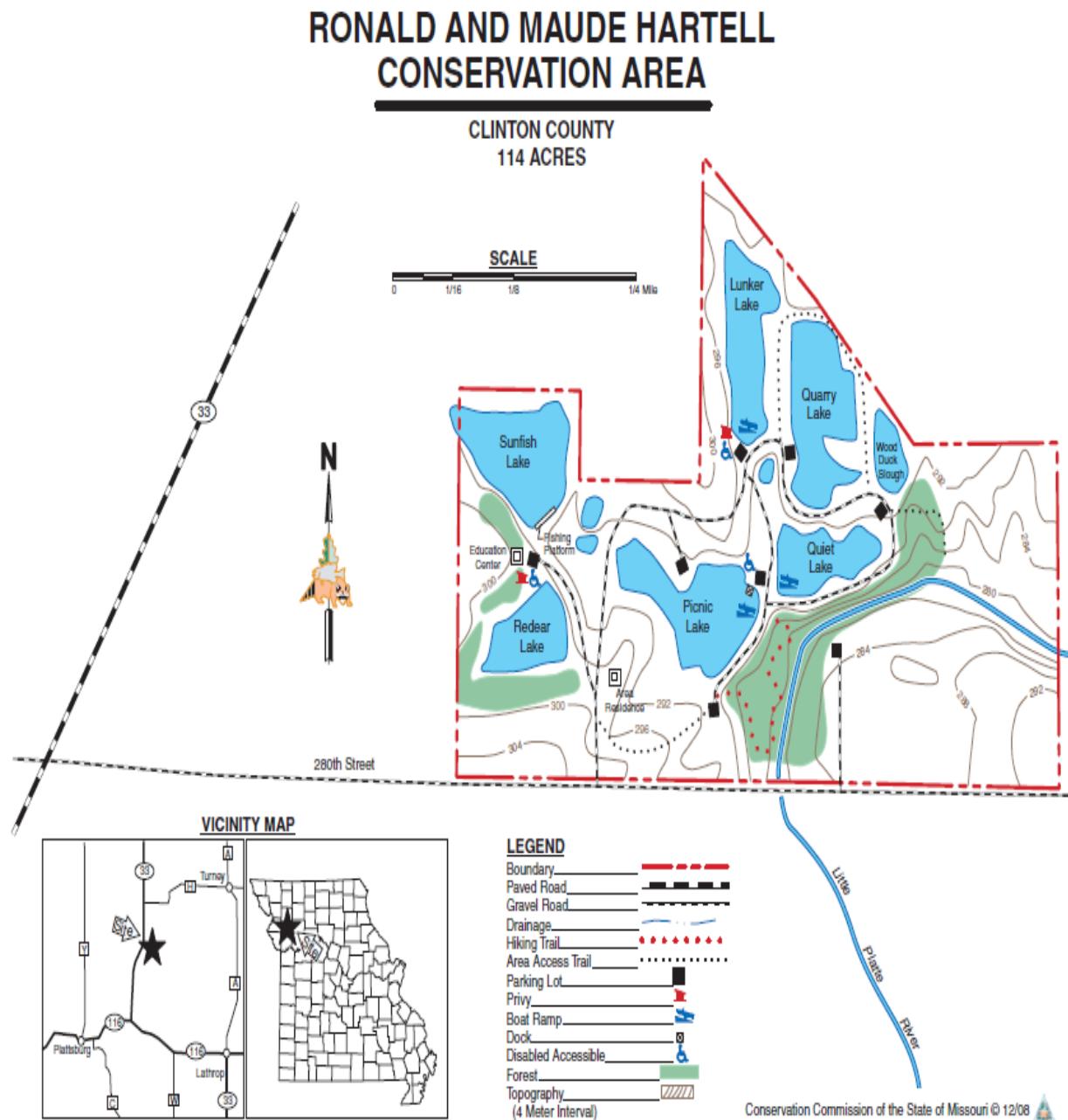
Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Aerial Map

**Ronald and Maude Hartell
Aerial Photo**



Appendix A: Draft Ronald and Maude Hartell Conservation Area Management Plan

Public Comments

Received during public comment period (June 1-30, 2014)

Hartell CA is a special hidden wonder. It is especially wonderful to have a place like this that doesn't get too much pressure. It's a great locale to take beginner fisherman and teach them fly fishing for large bass and bluegill. I would hate to see the population of large fish get desolated once the catch & release restrictions are lifted. Thank you for managing it so wonderfully to date. We have had special church fishing events up there and it went over great. By the way, when no one is watching folks will take fish they shouldn't have. I would put some trail cameras up to keep an eye on folks. I remember when you first opened the rules for happy holler lake and the big bas were gone in a year. Same thing with limp lake. Please consider only allowing catch and keep on half of the lakes and monitor folks to catch violators. Thanks for asking.

Please manage any area that was originally prairie as prairie. Restore and reconstruct the original MO habitat as much as possible in all areas of the state.

Needs more horse trail area.

I am 49 years old. My dad was a member of Clinton Co Sportsman's Club.

We had many family reunions here in the old barn.

There was a 2x12 diving board and swim beach on Quarry lake.

I fished here since conservation agency took over.

I am sure fishing pressure increased since and has not been as good as I remember.

Not sure that I really have any comments other than that catching fish has decreased probably from fishing pressure.